THE

AERONAUT.

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——— Tendere ad Indos,
Auroramque sequi. ———

VIRG. ÆN. VII. 605.

To sunny India's plains direct thy way,
And with aspiring wing pursue the day.

ANON.

It was proposed in a former number of the Aeronaut, to give a few specimens of Indian and Persic poetry, in order to corroborate an assertion of a resemblance between the nations of the East & west;— as well as to offer a few remarks on the affinity between the mythological systems of India, & those of Greece, Egypt, &c.* The former of these designs we must defer

* See No. VIII.

to a still further opportunity, and endeavor in the present paper to present a brief & rapid outline of the analogy subsisting between the systems already mentioned. The materials for such an investigation being neither easily procured, nor, when procured, without difficulty compressed into a moderate bulk, we shall only give a sketch of what we have acquired on the subject, leaving a fuller dissertation to abler hands, & more learned heads.

The posterity of Shem, it is generally supposed, originally settled in Africa & India, from which places, colonies migrated to ~~Chaonia~~, ~~Thy~~ ~~Phrygia~~, Italy and Greece, penetrated into Scandinavia, & Usbec Tartary, and are even supposed to have found their way by means of the eastern islands into Mexico & Peru, traces of their footsteps having been there observed.(2) It was the posterity of Shem that carried a

(2) Sir W. Jones's discourse on the Origin & Families of nations. —

taste for letters & refinement wherever they spread themselves, and enlightened the other portions of mankind with whom they might come in contact.

Conformably to this hypothesis, which we intend at present to assume, it follows, that India & Africa, or Egypt, are to be considered as the parent countries from which have emanated every spark of learning, & every germ of science, that have illumined the globe. Those other countries, therefore, who arrived at an early period of civilisation, may be considered as immediately deriving the rudiments of knowledge, religion, & art, from these mother nations. And, an attentive observation to the antiquities of all will tend in a remarkable degree to confirm the supposition.

That India & Egypt were originally the same people, there can be little doubt. The dark & mysterious fragments we have of Egyptian polity & religion, present an almost exact resemblance

to the accounts we have both of ancient and modern Hindûstan. The dim, misty ~~veil~~ veil that hangs upon their origin, presents through its shadowy folds, pictures, too much alike to be mistaken, though darkened by the lapse of ages, & ~~clouded~~ covered with the hoar of antiquity. Which nation has a prior claim to remote antiquity, it is more difficult to determine; although it appears, from concurrent testimony, & from the ancient writings of the Hindûs themselves, that the inhabitants of India were once those of Egypt, & migrated from their mother country in search of some clime more to the eastward. The fragments of Egyptian history, laws, religion & manners, may be traced to their origin, in the accounts contained in the writings already mentioned; and it is therefore fair to infer that Egypt was the original seat of both nations, and the spot from which both flowed, down the

dark tide of ages, the elements of science and the rudiments of art.(3) Hence,

"—Fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years;
As buoyant on the stormy main,
A painted wreck appears."

Had we the leisure and the opportunity, we might enter more at length into the similarity between the two nations, trace their footsteps among the wilds of Scandinavia, the forests of Britain, the "feather-cinctured chiefs" of South America, till, lost in the sublime speculation, our souls would be wrapt in extacy, & entranced with wonder. At present however, we shall confine ourselves to our original intention, & only ~~point~~ mark out a few points of resemblance between the mythological systems of Egypt or India, & Greece & Rome.

(3) See Lieut. Wilford's Essay on Egypt and the countries adjacent to the Cali, or Nile, from the ancient books of the Hindus. Asiatic Researches, vol. 3. —

In our subsequent remarks, we shall consider Egypt and India as one & the same people; and therefore when their names are mentioned, it will be in relation to the original ~~one~~ nation which once contained them both.

Narayana, the first male, moved upon the waters, around which was at first spread Tamas, or darkness. This precisely answers to the Chaos of the Greeks; both implying that state of gloom and confusion previous to the period when the spirit moved upon the face of the deep, and called all to life & light & beauty; when the newly created universe arose in splendor, and the sun began his diurnal revolutions.

It was also a prevalent opinion among the Greek mythologists, that the Gods were born on the banks of the Nile. This we may naturally suppose to have proceeded from Egypt; but the Hindus themselves attribute the same thing to the river Cali, or Nile.

But the very names of some of the Grecian deities may be traced to their origin among the writings & in the mythology of the Hindûs. Juno, Bacchus, Apollo, and many others, have undergone a trifling change of name; and with regard to those whose actual names are not in both systems alike, the stories told of, and the actions ascribed to them, leave no manner of doubt that the same deities are intended. Those related by the Hindûs are wild, inconsistent, and extravagant in the extreme. The multiplication of impossible achievements, & to us, ridiculous adventures, has rendered the Indian system a complicated maze of absurdity. The Greeks, on the other hand, although their stories are sufficiently extravagant, and appear more like the dreams of a disordered imagination, than the productions or belief of men in their right senses, yet contrived to avoid the

almost incessant contradictions of the Hindus, and softened, by their superior taste, and more exquisite mental refinement, the terrible machinery of their great prototype, into a system more pleasing and more adapted to arrest the gentler feelings of man. The Hindu might in imagination soar to that terrific height where was the throne of Seeva & where

"Upwards, to reach its head,
Ten myriad years the aspiring Brama soa
And still, as up he fled
Above him still th' immeasurable spread"(a)

He may descend to the dismal realms of Yamen, "where rolls the fiery flood
Guiding the realms of Padalon around."(a)

He may look back to an antiquity, scarcely conceivable, or roam over the eleva boundless extent of an earth, whose dimensions, and whose composition are alike the creatures of his imagination.

(a) Southey's Curse of Kehama.

The Greek on the other hand, neither soared so high, nor descended so low. His imagination, however fanciful, did not prompt him to such glaring absurdities as it did the Hindû. He loved to float along the Zephyr, to wake the lyre upon the heights of Parnassus. His heaven was not so ineffably resplendent, nor his hell so sublimely terrible.

But to return. The limits of an essay like the present prevent us from ~~presenting~~ giving a confirmation of our former remarks, in the wild, but interesting legends of Indian antiquity. In them, the mythology of Greece is every where to be found, as well in the actions of the superior deities, as in those of the demi-gods, heroes, & other illustrious characters of remote antiquity. We shall however, mention a few of the principal ones in a superficial manner.

The tragical story of Oedipus and Jocasta has its foundation in Sanscrit

fable. The very names of the actors in that miserable tragedy have only suffered a slight corruption. The story is Egyptian, and the Greeks have assumed Thebes in their own country for the city of the same name in Egypt, where the circumstance may be supposed to have taken place. Labdacus, Laius, & Cadmus, are distinctly to be pointed out as Hindu or Egyptian in their origin & names.

Neither was the Ship Argo the invention of Grecian mythologists. They found already shaped to their hands, in the pages of Egyptian learning, & the mysterious accounts of Egyptian theology, what only required a chaster & more classical hand to deck with the flowers of poetry, & to make a beautiful and pleasing romantic tale. That wondrous bark was manned from the Egyptian mythology, though robed in the costume of the Greek.

The curious idea of the atlantis, or continent beyond the sea, is also borrowed from the primitive system. Even the terors of the infernal regions were supplied from the same source. Charon has his original; and Cerberus himself is only a copy of the Sanscrit Cerbura.

The romantic account of Perseus and Andromeda is remarkably similar to an Hindu story; and the Indian constellation Antarmadá is the very same as the Grecian Andromeda. To these instances we may add the account of the amazons, or nation governed by women, both systems giving an account of them.

Deucalion, or Deo-calyun, according to the Hindus, was a powerful prince of antiquity, and was the evident origin of the Grecian hero of that name.

The four ages so often alluded to by the Grecian poets & mythologists, as having successively visited the

earth may be traced to the same source, & are particularly mentioned in the Institutes of Menu.

The last circumstance we shall mention with respect to the Greek mythology, is the account we have of the Eleusinian mysteries. The Gods there worshipped, & the rites supposed to have been there performed, are clearly of an Egyptian or Indian origin. The words with which the assembly of the initiated were dismissed,

Κογξ, Ὄμ, Παξ,
Conx, Om, Pax,

which have so long puzzled the commentator & the antiquarian, are at length discovered to be purely Sanscrit words, and to be used even to this day by the Brahmens, as they were by the Eleusinian worshippers at the close of their ceremonies. They are written, Canscha, Om, Pacsha.(5)

(5) See Capt. Wilford's remarks on the names of the Cabirian Deities, &c. &c., in the

We may therefore, to borrow the language of the great Sir Wm Jones, "now "be assured that the old Hindus had a "knowledge of misr and the Nile; & that "the legends of Cepheus & Cassiopeia (to "select one example out of many) were "the same with those of Cepéya and "Cásyapí; that Perseus & andromeda were "no other than Párasíra & antarmadá; "& that Lord Bacon, whom we may justly "call the great architect of the temple of "knowledge, concluded rightly, that the "mythology of the Greeks, which their "oldest writers do not pretend to have "invented, was no more than a light air,

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Asiatic Researches, vol. 5. he ~~should~~ subjoins his explication of these words. —

"Conscha signifies the object of our most "ardent wishes.

"Om is the famous monosyllable used both "at the beginning & conclusion of a prayer, or any "religious rite, like amen.

"Paesha exactly answers to the obsolete latin "word vix: it signifies chance, course, stead, place, "turn of work, duty, fortune. It appears also from "Hesychius, that these words were pronounced aloud "at the conclusion of every momentous transaction "religious or civil." &c &c. —

"which had passed from a more ancient
"people into the flutes of the Grecians,
"and which they modulated into such
"descants as best suited their fancies &
"the state of their new settlements."

The Roman mythology was so much like the Grecian, that is not worth while delaying to consider it. Some of the ancient parts of their fabulous history, however, bear a strong affinity to several Hindû accounts.

We cannot conclude this paper, without noticing the remarkable analogy of the Greek & Latin languages to the Sanscrit, & particularly the Latin. The Latin is generally acknowledged to have been an ancient dialect of the Greek language; and as that resembles most in its structure & words the Sanscrit, we have a strong internal evidence that the ancient Greeks derived not only their religion, but even their language from that great primitive nation, whose history

must remain buried in the deep night of obscurity, whose annals have never been handed down to a wondering posterity, — which has been the mother of learning, & the source of art science, & which has diffused the light of refinement from the remotest ages, herself shrouded in eternal darkness, & wrapt in the gloom of ages. Every day that rolls over our heads places her at a more hopeless distance. Conjecture can alone attempt to pierce the horrid void, and withdraw the veil that conceals her glories from the eye. But conjecture itself must fail. We must be content to muse in wonder & astonishment on her probable condition, and to heave the sigh of lament that we have not been permitted to hail the fountain head of that majestic stream, whose waters are now —

spread over the globe, whose influence enlivens, & whose moisture fertilises every country where it flows.

E.